

Message Text

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ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 EA-10 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 /028 W
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R 211735Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

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FOR INR - MCAFEE FROM AMBASSADOR
E.O. 11652: EXEMPT FROM AUTOMATIC DECONTROL AUTHORIZED BY W MCAFEE
TAGS: PINR, CH, XA, MR
SUBJECT: REFERENCE AID ON PRC AMBASSADORS

REF: STATE 198321

1. ASSUME THAT DEPARTMENT COMPLIERS IN PREPARING PROJECTED BIOGRAPHIC REFERENCE DOCUMENT ON CHINESE DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES IN AFRICA WILL DRAW UPON MY JULY 25 MEMO TO BIOGRAPHIC FILES (COPIES TO INR/OIL/B)- WILLIAMS AND HARROD) IN CHINESE AMBASSADOR TO ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MAURITANI KANG MAO CHAO AS WELL AS ON REST OF EXTENSIVE SERIES OF BIO NOTES AND MEMCONS NOUAKCHOTT STAFF AS DESPATCHED OVER PAST THREE YEARS. FOLLOWING ADDRESSES SPECIFIC QUESTIONS REFTEL, AND RECAPS OUR GENERAL IMPRESSION OF PEKING'S REPRESENTATIVE IN MAURITANIA.

2. SINCE AMBASSADOR KANG'S ARRIVAL IN NOUAKCHOTT IN EARLY 1975, HE HAS MAINTAINED CONSISTENTLY CORDIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH AMBASSADOR AND WITH EMBOFFS -- ON NEUTRAL GROUND, I.E. IN A PUBLIC PLACE OR A THIRD COUNTRY EMBASSY. EXCEPT FOR ONE VISIT TO U.S. AMBASSADOR'S OFFICE TO RETURN NEW AMERICAN AMBASSADOR'S INITIAL CALL ON HIM (APRIL 1975), AMBASSADOR KANG HAS STUDIOUSLY DECLINED TO SET FOOT IN U.S. EMBASSY. (USUALLY HE SIMPLY IGNORES OUR REPEATED INVITATIONS;
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BUT ON TWO OCCASIONS HE WENT TO GREAT LENGTHS TO EXPLAIN HIS ABSENCE, FIRST PERSONALLY TO DEPARTING DCM TO INSIST THAT HIS OWN RESPONSIBILITIES AS HOST HAD PREVENTED HIM FROM ATTENDING U.S. AMBASSADOR'S FAREWELL RECEPTION; HE LATER HAD HIS SECRETARY TELEPHONE INVOLVED (AND PATENTLY INSUBSTANTIAL) EXPLANATION OF WHY HE WAS UNABLE TO ATTEND U.S. AMBASSADOR'S RECEPTION INTRODUCING NEW DCM TO NOUAKCHOTT COMMUNITY.)

NONETHELESS, DESPITE HIS RIGID ADHERENCE TO PROTOCOL (OR PERHAPS TO STANDING FOREIGN MINISTRY INSTRUCTIONS), KANG IS A FRIENDLY AND TALKATIVE INTERLOCUTOR SO FAR AS OFFICIAL AMERICANS ARE CONCERNED, GRACIOUS TO POINT OF BEING COURTLY (IN SHARP CONTRAST TO IRAQI AMBASSADOR, A HARDLINE BATHI, WHO WHILE IN SAME PROTOCOL SITUATION, ONLY BEGRUDGINGLY SHAKES HANDS AND EXCHANGES MINIMAL GREETINGS WITH OFFICIAL AMERICANS). AMBASSADOR KANG HAS FREELY DISCUSSED ACTIVITIES OF CHINESE MEDICAL MISSIONS, AGRICULTURAL TECHNICIANS, AND ENGINEERS WORKING ON PROJECTED DEEP WATER PORT FOR NOUAKCHOTT WITH EMBOFFS. HE HAS SOUGHT OUT U.S. AMBASSADOR AT DINNERS, PREFERRING RELAXED ENGLISH CONVERSATION TO FORMAL AND FORCED CONVERSATION WITH OTHERS IN FRENCH THROUGH HIS INTERPRETER. ON ONE MEMORABLE OCCASION, KANG WAS PLEASED TO HAVE U.S. AMBASSADOR SERVE AS HIS INTERPRETER IN A CONVERSATION WITH MAURITANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER (THINKING THAT EVENING AT RESIDENCE OF PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR WAS TO BE ALL ENGLISH, KANG HAD LEFT HIS REGULARLY ASSIGNED INTERPRETER AT HOME).

3. KANG HAS BEEN EFFECTIVE AMBASSADOR IN NOUAKCHOTT. HE WORKS HARD AT CULTIVATING MAURITANIAN OFFICIALS AND CITIZENS DESPITE HANDICAP OF HAVING TO WORK THROUGH INTERPRETER (HE ATTEMPTED TO LEARN FRENCH DURING FIRST SIX MONTHS OF HIS STAY HERE, BUT GAVE UP IN FRUSTRATION, DECIDING TO CONCENTRATE ON IMPROVING HIS ONCE EXTENSIVE BUT RUSTY KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH). KANG AND HIS COLLEAGUES BENEFIT FROM UNIVERSALLY FRIENDLY RECEPTION ACCORDED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THEM BY MAURITANIANS WHO SEE CHINA AS ONLY A FEW SHORT YEARS AHEAD OF THEM ON DEVELOPMENT PATH AND WHO ARE GRATEFUL FOR CHINESE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE; BUT THEY HAVE WORKED HARD AT CONSOLIDATING AND EXTENDING WARM BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP THROUGH ASSIDUOUS CULTIVATION OF MAURITANIANS VIA MEETINGS, FILMS, CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS, AND FREQUENT AUTO TRIPS INTO COUNTRYSIDE. HOWEVER, AMBASSADOR DOES NOT RPT NOT APPEAR TO HAVE EXTENSIVE OR IN-DEPTH KNOWLEDGE OF AFRICAN OR ARAB AFFAIRS; RATHER HE GIVES IMPRESSION OF ALERT, PERCEPTIVE, INTELLIGENT PERSON WHO IS CONSTANTLY WORKING TO ACQUIRE REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE OF AFRICAN ISSUES AND PROBLEMS WHICH FORM INVENTORY OF CURRENT MAURITANIAN CONCERNS.

4. AMBASSADOR KANG HAS NEVER GIVEN ANY INDICATION OF HIS POSITION IN PEKING HIERARCHY EITHER TO U.S. EMBOFFS OR, SO FAR AS WE ARE AWARE, TO ANY OTHER MEMBERS OF NOUAKCHOTT DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY. GIRM FOREIGN MINISTER OULD MOUKNASS, HOWEVER, OBSERVED UPON HIS RETURN FROM APRIL 1977 STATE VISIT TO PEKING BY PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH THAT KANG IS AN IMPORTANT FIGURE ("UN GRAND MONSIEUR") IN PRC POWER STRUCTURE. IT IS CLEAR FROM RELATIONSHIP KANG HAS WITH MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF THAT HE IS VERY MUCH IN CHARGE,

AND IS PERHPAS EVEN A BIT FEARED. MOREOVER, FACT THAT MADAME KANG WEARS RICH BROCADED SILKS RATHER THAN SHAPELESS GREY COTTON TAVLORED UNIFORM WHICH IS STANDARD APPAREL FOR ALL OTHER FEMALE PRC OFFICIALS, SUGGESTS STRONGLY THAT KANGS, MAN AND WIFE, ARE DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT AND SET WELL APART FROM STANDARD CHINESE DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES. KANG APPEARS TO BE IN GOOD HEALTH FOR A MAN OF HIS 58 YEARS.

5. ONLY PHOTOGRAPHS AVAILABLE OF AMBASSADOR KANG ARE NEWSPAPER CLIPS. SELECTION OF RECENT PRESS PHOTOS PLUS FOUR POLARIOD PHOTOS OF CHINESE EMBASSY HAVE BEEN POUCHED TO AF/W KILLION FOR DELIVERY TO COMPLIERS OF PEKING DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION DOCUMENT.

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6. WOULD VERY MUCH APPRECIATE ANY BACKGROUND DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE ON AMBASSADOR KANG AND IN PARTICULAR, ON WHAT GIVES HIM HIS OBIVOUS FREEDOM OF MANEUVER.

HANDYSIDE

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